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## LESSON LEARNED

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### **Emergency Public Information and Warning: Updating Route Alerting Maps**

#### **SUMMARY**

Emergency managers and transportation officials should update route alerting maps on a regular basis. This can help ensure that emergency response personnel tasked with alerting residents during an emergency can complete the notification process of all area residents in a timely fashion.

#### **DESCRIPTION**

The Limerick Generating Station (LGS) is a nuclear energy plant located in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, about 20 miles northwest of Philadelphia. The LGS is surrounded by both a 10-mile and a 50-mile Emergency Planning Zone (EPZ). Following any emergency, including natural disasters, local emergency response agencies would employ an emergency warning system (EWS) to provide information and instructions to area residents. This EWS includes 165 sirens in the 10-mile EPZ. The sirens signal residents to tune to the local emergency alert station (EAS) for additional information about the emergency. If the siren system fails to operate, notification teams of local police and/or fire department personnel alert area residents. These 3-person teams employ route alerting maps to conduct door-to-door notifications or broadcast emergency announcements at 30-second intervals. Team members travel in vehicles equipped with public address systems at approximately 20 miles per hour. These emergency announcements alert residents to the emergency and direct them to tune to the local EAS stations for additional information.

On November 17, 2009, Federal Emergency Management Agency Region III sponsored the LGS Full-Scale Exercise (FSE). This FSE involved 3 federal agencies, 19 state agencies, 184 county organizations, and 17 private sector organizations. The exercise scenario simulated a containment failure in the LGS reactor, which resulted in the dispersal of radioactive material. The main purpose of the LGS FSE was to test the response capabilities of local agencies and organizations located in the 10-mile EPZ surrounding the LGS. In addition, this FSE tested the ability of participants to alert local residents to an emergency at the LGS within 45 minutes of the initial decision by authorized offsite emergency officials to notify the public.

During the FSE, some emergency response agencies responsible for notifying residents of an emergency lacked updated route alerting maps. For example, the route alerting maps for Upper Frederick Township and Upper Pottsgrove Township did not detail housing developments that had been built within the last 4 years. The lack of updated route alerting maps could have hindered the ability of emergency responders to notify all residents in these newly developed areas within 45 minutes during an actual event. As a result, these

residents would have lacked critical protective action information at the onset of an emergency.

The LGS after-action report (AAR) recommends that emergency managers review local route alerting maps regularly and update these maps as necessary to reflect all appropriate changes. In addition, the AAR states that emergency managers should identify all the resources needed to ensure public notification timeliness in the event of a siren failure.



**Map of emergency evacuation routes around the LGS**

Emergency managers and transportation officials should update route alerting maps on a regular basis. This can help ensure that emergency response personnel tasked with alerting residents during an emergency can complete the notification process of all area residents in a timely fashion.

#### CITATIONS

Exelon Nuclear Corporation. *Emergency Planning for the Limerick Area: Important Safety Information for Your Community 2009-2010*. 15 Apr 2009.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=49377>

Federal Emergency Management Agency. *Limerick Generating Station After Action Report/Improvement Plan*. 09 Feb 2010.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=43306>

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